

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SSM-03 DOE-15 SOE-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01
ACDA-12 HA-05 /122 W
-----005484 271739Z /72

P 271633Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9631
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, UR, US, XF
SUBJECT: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF M.E.

SUMMARY: SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF M.E. ATTEMPTS TO
EXPLAIN AWAY U.S.-ISRAELI "DIFFERENCES" AND SHOWS THAT
ISRAEL REMAINS CHIEF ALLY OF U.S. IN REGION DESPITE
EXISTENCE OF OTHER U.S. INTERESTS SUCH AS OIL AND MAIN-
TENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA. END SUMMARY.
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1. SOVIET WEEKEND (MARCH 25-27) CENTRAL PRESS COVERAGE OF
BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF
SOUTHERN LEBANON IS HEAVY IN VOLUME, SARCASTIC AND
CRITICAL IN TONE. SEVERAL OF MANY ARTICLES ARE MORE
IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS, AMONG THESE ARE TASS PIECES IN
MARCH 26 AND 27 CENTRAL PRESS, LAST THIRD OF

"INTERNATIONAL WEEK" COLUMN BY ARKADIY MASLENNIKOV IN MARCH 27 PRAVDA, K. KOLESNICHENKO PIECE IN MARCH 25 PRAVDA, AND "OPINION OF COLUMNIST" BY S. KONDRASHOV IN MARCH 24 IZVESTIYA.

2. BASIC THEMES OF MOST ARTICLES INCLUDE FOLLOWING:

-- ALLEGED "DIFFERENCES" AND "DIFFICULTIES" BETWEEN BEGIN AND CARTER ADMINISTRATION MAY REFLECT SLIGHT PROBLEMS OVER APPROACH TO M.E. SETTLEMENT, BUT BASIC U.S. LINE OF UNDEVIATING SUPPORT FOR ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY REMAINS, AS EVIDENCED BY U.S. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL INCLUDING DECISION - AGAINST PENTAGON ADVICE - TO SELL FLIR SYSTEM TO ISRAELIS.

-- ISRAELI TACTICAL GOAL OF RETAINING CONTROL OVER SINAI BASES SERVES U.S. STRATEGIC INTEREST IN REGION, FOR EXAMPLE (ACCORDING TO NYT) U.S. USE OF ISRAELI BASE AT ETSION (PHONETIC) FOR RECCE FLIGHTS OVER RED SEA.

-- IT IS CHARACTERISTIC THAT THOSE ABROAD (I.E., U.S.) WHO TALK OF HUMAN RIGHTS DO NOT OPENLY AND DIRECTLY CONDEMN ISRAELI "GENOCIDE" IN LEBANON.

-- ISRAEL HAS RELIED ON EGYPT'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY ISOLATION TO FURTHER ITS EXPANSIONIST POLICIES.
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3. IN SLIGHT CONTRAST TO THESE GENERAL THEMES, S. KONDRASHOV IN MARCH 24 IZVESTIYA EXPLAINED SUBTLETIES OF U.S.-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES AS RESULTING FROM CARTER ADMINISTRATION DISSATISFACTION WITH BEGIN'S "BEHAVIOR," TO WIT. BEGIN'S FAILURE TO REALIZE THAT U.S. INTERESTS IN M.E. WERE BROADER THAN WERE INTERESTS OF ISRAEL ALONE. SPECIFICALLY, THESE BROADER INTERESTS INCLUDED OIL AND THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS. THE U.S., SAID KONDRASHOV, RELYING ON SAUDI ARABIA, WANTS PEACE IN THE M.E., BUT IT WANTS A PRO-AMERICAN, ANTI-SOVIET PEACE. THUS, IN THAT SENSE, BEGIN'S EMPHASIS ON MILITARY SETTLEMENTS IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS OTHER U.S. INTERESTS AND, AS A RESULT, THERE IS FRICTION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL.

4. COMMENT: SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS TO CREDIT U.S.-ISRAELI "DIFFERENCES" WITH REAL SIGNIFICANCE PROBABLY REFLECTS PERSISTENT, IF DISTORTED SOVIET IMAGE OF U.S. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN REGION. PARTICULARLY REVEALING IS KONDRASHOV'S DESCRIPTION OF U.S. INTEREST IN ESTABLISHMENT OF PRO-AMERICAN, ANTI-SOVIET PEACE IN M.E., A

FRANK ADMISSION OF SOVIET FEARS. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW05870
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780133-0045
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780322/aaaaasmi.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3195767
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF M.E. SUMMARY: SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF M.E. ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN AWAY U.S.-ISRAELI "DIFFERENCES" AND SHOWS
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, PGOV, UR, US, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3cba12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014